भारतीय राजदूतों के कार्यकाल का बढ़ाया जाना

6637. **श्री शंकर दयाल सिंह:** क्या विदेश मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) किन-किन देशों में भारतीय राजदूतों का कार्यकाल समाप्त हो गया है और क्या उनमें से कुछ राजदूतों के कार्यकाल में अगले आदेशों तक वृद्धि कर दी गई है; और

(ख) यदि हां, तो ऐसे देशों और ऐसे राजदूतों के नाम क्या-क्या है?

विदेश मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री आर० एल० भाटिया): (क) विदेश स्थित भारतीय मिशनों के प्रमुखों के रूप में कार्यरत दूतिक अधिकारियों के लिए कोई निश्चित कार्यकाल तय नहीं है। तथापि, भारतीय मिशनों के अवृत्तिक प्रमुखों की नियुक्ति एक निश्चित कार्यकाल के लिए की जाती है, जिसे बढ़ाया जा सकता है। इस समय ऐसा कोई मिशन प्रमुख नहीं है जो "अगले आदेश होने तक" आधार पर कार्यरत हो।

(ख) प्रश्न नहीं उठता।

Pending Passport Applications at Regional Passport Office, Bangalore

6638. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) total number of passport applications for issue of passports pending with the Regional Passport Office, Bangalore till 31st March 1994;

(b) what is the number of applications out of them which are pending (i) below three months (ii) below six months (iii) six months and above; and

(c) steps taken to clear the pending application?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R.L. BHATIA): (a) and (b) A total of 35904 applications were pending on 31.3.94 with the Passport Office Bangalore of which 20948 were pending for over a month according to provisional figures. Statistics are maintained for total pendency and pendency over one month.

(c) Government have taken a number of steps to reduce the pendency at Passport Offices and expedite the issue of passports including *inter alia* augumentation of staff strength, streamlining of procedures and the introduction of a productivity linked incentive scheme.

Cultural Programmes Organised by ICCR

6639. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what are the activities of ICCR to promote cultural relations with Gulf and O.I.C. countries;

(b) how many cultural exchange programmes were organised during 1993-94 in the Gulf and O.I.C. countries; and

(c) what are the details of programmes of ICCR scheduled for 1994-95 particularly with Gult and OIC countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) ICCR's activities to promote cultural relations with Gulf and O.I.C. countries include exchange of performing artists, exchange of visits by eminent persons, presentation of books, holding of photographic/painting exhibitions and grant of scholarships under Cultural Exchange Programmes to these countries.

(b) During 1993-94, ICCR-

(i) received two cultural troupes from Syria and Egypt;

(ii) sent out one cultural troupes each to Uganda, Pakistan, Muscat and three troupes to Egypt;

(iii) received 24 eminent persons from Bangladesh Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Afghanistan;

(iv) arranged visit by 3 eminent persons to Malaysia and Bangladesh;

(v) presented, through respective Indian Missions, 148 books on